

New Israeli Immigrants Prepare to Vote

The Knesset election on Jan. 22 will see tens of thousands of new immigrants vote in Israel for the first time.

According to the Jewish Agency, more than 70,000 people have immigrated to Israel since the last Knesset election, in February 2009. Around 55,000 of them are now 18 or older, making them eligible to vote.

Seminars are being held at absorption centers and other Jewish Agency facilities around the country to teach immigrants about Israel's election system.

"We think it is important to prepare immigrants for the democratic process," said Yehuda Sharf, the Jewish Agency's director of immigration and absorption.

A mock voting booth was set up at an absorption center in Beersheba on Wednesday.

"We are very excited and happy that we can vote in Israel," said Carmen Mizrahi, who immigrated from South America with her husband several months ago, and who participated in Wednesday's simulation.